

## Old Friends by KaptainSpork

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**Summary:**

Y/N and Steve were childhood friends. As they grew older they drifted apart.

In their last year of high school they see each other again at a Halloween party, where Y/N falls into the Strange world Steve has found himself in.

## 1. Reunions

When Y/N was little, she lived a short five-minute walk from Steve Harrington. Their moms were good friends in high school, and were constantly at each others house, bringing their kids along for the ride. Y/N and Steve were inseparable the moment they met. The two of them were never seen without the other, always playing outside without sparing other kids their age a second thought.

Even though the two of them got along so well, they were polar opposites. Y/N would only talk when necessary, while Steve didn't know when to stop talking. Steve was rambunctious and liked to explore, but Y/N was happy to sit back and watch as he would run around with an almost endless amount of energy. They were so different, but that was what made them work. Steve could read Y/N like a book, and when Steve got too excited or agitated, she was able to distract him.

As they grew older, however, they drifted apart. Steve was getting more popular, while Y/N found she enjoyed her days quietly instead of with a huge group of people. Eventually, they stopped talking, going their own way with their own set of friends once high school hit. Y/N didn't mind all that much, falling into her role as a silent observer while Steve bathed in the attention of his peers and became the school heartthrob.

From time to time they would pass each other in the halls, and Steve would give Y/N a large smile and a wave. Y/N would return it with less enthusiasm but was glad he didn't forget about her. These interactions earned her odd glances and the occasional glare from a girl trying to get 'King Steve's' attention that Y/N easily ignored.

Y/N constantly found herself in the company of middle schoolers, seeing as she was the go-to babysitter out of everyone else her age. The kid she looked after the most was Dustin, which in turn included the rest of his "party" when they couldn't hang out at the Wheeler's house. They were good kids, though they had quite the attitude, always wanting to learn more.

She grew close to the kids during the three years she babysat them.

From time to time she would even join in on D&D, playing side characters they would encounter in their quests since Nancy stopped doing so a long time ago. It was slightly embarrassing, but the boys loved it, so Y/N sucked it up and played whatever character they needed.

When Will went missing, it hit Y/N hard. She felt oddly close to the quiet boy and would find herself talking to him quietly if the other three ended up arguing over something stupid again. Wanting to help the Byers' as much as she could, Y/N put up the missing person flyers they made outside and inside of the gas station she worked at and gave the extras to anyone that would take them. It was hard seeing Jonathan at school, he was like an empty shell, not focused on anything that wasn't finding her brother.

Almost immediately after Will disappeared a girl showed up, though Y/N only saw her in passing when she went to drop off a comic book for Mike. Y/N didn't think too much of the girl at the time, though thought her sudden appearance was odd. The next day it was discovered that Barb, Nancy's friend, had run away.

The quiet town was a mess, nothing like this had ever happened before. The strangest thing was when Will suddenly turned up out of thin air, looking tired, but relatively okay. It didn't take long before the kids started talking, calling Will all kinds of names. Y/N always tried to help the kid, not treating him any different from before, but she could tell it wasn't making much of a difference.

His friends seemed to know more than they were letting on, always vague with their answers, but as long as they were able to help Will, Y/N didn't care. The only thing Y/N knew for certain was that the girl with the buzz cut was gone, and she must have been involved somehow.

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Halloween was something Y/N could never forget since Dustin would talk about it weeks before anyone else was. It was the 'best night of the year,' after all. He would go on and on about how he and his friends were all going as the Ghostbusters, and they were going to have the coolest costumes in their grade.

For high schoolers, Halloween meant another party filled with drinking and bad decisions. Though reluctant, Y/N figured that in her last year of high school, she might as well be a “normal” teenager. So she put together a last-minute costume and joined in on the “fun”.

The party was loud and chaotic, with so many people in the house they were practically on top of each other. Y/N stayed on the outskirts of the party to keep away from the flailing limbs while nursing a cup filled with “punch”. Y/N sipped her cup while surveying the room, trying to find anyone she recognized. There were a few girls she would talk to in class, but they weren’t friends by any means, so she kept looking.

There was a commotion somewhere in the kitchen, and everyone nearby stopped what they were doing to watch while those just out of sight strained to look over people’s shoulders. When a punch covered Nancy pushed through the crowd with Steve hot on her heels, Y/N could guess what happened.

They weren’t gone for long before Steve came back, looking worse for wear as he stormed out the front door while trying to look as normal as possible. Y/N hesitated only a moment before going after her old friend, putting her cup down on a nearby bookshelf as she did.

While not as active as she used to be, Y/N was still decently fast and was able to reach Steve before he even crossed the street to where his car was.

“Steve,” Y/N called, moving around a drunk couple stumbling around on the front lawn. Steve turned around with a nasty look on his face, mouth open in a snarl to tell Y/N off before he realized who she was. His face fell into one of surprise, and he gaped at her for a moment before he collected his thoughts.

“Y/N, what are you doing here?”

“Wanted to experience the party life,” she shrugged, coming to stop in front of him, “are you okay?”

“You saw that huh?” Steve said, letting out a deep sigh as he pushed his hair up and out of his face. “Look, I don’t want to talk about it.”

“That’s not what I asked Steve, I want to know if you’re okay.”

Steve stared at her for a long minute, looking at her as if he never met her before. Then he laughed lightly, it didn’t quite reach his eyes, but Y/N figured it was better than nothing.

“I forgot you were like this,” Steve said, reaching out to her, only to stop halfway as if he realized what he was doing. Y/N quickly grabbed his hand before he could pull it away, turning his hand over to trace the lines on his palm like she used to do when they were children when Steve needed to calm down. Though the hot blush Y/N felt crawl up her neck was a new development.

“You okay?” Y/N repeated, not looking up from his hand. It was different from when they were children. Steve’s hand was obviously bigger, but now it was larger than her own, callused from playing on the basketball team all through high school. Y/N looked up just in time to see Steve shake his head.

Happy that he didn’t try to hide it, Y/N ripped Steve’s hand and dragged him over to his car. He floundered around for something to say but followed none the less, moving to fall into step with her so they were side by side. In seconds they were in front of the car, Steve rummaging around in his pockets for his car keys.

“Is that tree still there?” Y/N asked letting go of his hand so she could walk around to the passenger side of the car. Steve was in the car and starting it up by the time she had the door happen. Y/N quickly got in the car, trying to ignore the looks of the more sober partygoers that were outside.

Steve didn’t respond, but she knew without him answering that the tree was still there, she could see it from her bedroom window whenever she looked outside. Y/N found herself looking out at it from time to time, abandoning her book to watch the branches sway in the wind. She could almost feel the breeze on her face thinking about it, remembering the nights the two of them would spend together up in that tree.

The drive was silent. It didn’t bother Y/N, but she could tell it was putting Steve on edge since he kept opening his mouth like he

wanted to say something, but not knowing what. Though Y/N liked to watch him struggle, she decided to be nice.

“It’s been awhile since I’ve seen you this quiet.” Y/N commented, grinning over at him. Steve snorted but gave her a thankful smile.

“It’s been awhile since I’ve seen you at all.”

“We see each other at school all the time.” Steve shook his head.

“That’s not what I meant. I meant like this,” he gestured between the two of them with his hand, giving Y/N a pointed look, “Together, talking. Like old times.”

Y/N shrugged, but could remember the pain she felt when they stopped talking, “we grew apart.”

“Doesn’t mean I don’t miss you.”

Though he meant it, Y/N could tell that he didn’t mean to say it out loud. Y/N gave him a smile, looking out the front windshield to watch the dark trees pass them by.

“I missed you too.”

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“I really don’t think this is a good idea,” Steve said, looking at Y/N as she reached for the low tree branch.

“We used to do this all the time.”

“Yeah, when we were kids,” Steve shook his head, moving to stand next to her when she swung her feet forward to push off the tree trunk, “When was the last time you climbed a tree?”

“When was the last time we hung out?” Y/N grunted, slowly moving to stand on the branch. Steve cursed under his breath, but shed his jacket and sunglasses and put them next to Y/N’s to follow her up the tree.

From being on the basketball team, Steve was in way better shape than Y/N and was able to pass her as she was climbing the second

branch. On the fourth branch up, Steve stopped on the thick branch, sitting down as he watched Y/N struggle to get up to the third one.

“This is harder than it used to be,” Y/N panted, smiling gratefully at Steve when he reached down to help her onto his branch.

“Well, maybe if you actually did something other than reading all day this would be easier for you.”

Y/N cursed him out under her breath, and Steve laughed at the string curses leaving her lips. He quickly quieted down, looking out over the forest as he remembered the events from the past hour.

“She said it was bullshit,” startled, Y/N turned to Steve, not expecting to hear about the events of the party. His face was hard, but his eyes looked sad, hollow at the memory of what happened.

“What’s bullshit?”

“Me, our relationship, acting like we’re in love.”

“Acting?”

“Yeah, acting,” Steve heavily dragged his hand across his face. He looked older than he was at that moment, haggard and tired, but the dim light of the moon illuminated his face, and Y/N couldn’t help but notice how handsome he was.

“Do you think she meant it?” Steve gave a distracted hum, looking over at Y/N with red-rimmed eyes, “Did you think she said it just cuz she was drunk, or because it’s easier to say things you wouldn’t when you’re sober?”

“I don’t, god, I don’t know,” Steve said, defeated. Y/N scooted over, and Steve immediately dropped his head onto her shoulder. He didn’t make a noise, but Y/N could feel the silent tears dropping onto the exposed skin of her shoulder.

They stayed up in the tree for a while, watching the stars as they appeared in the sky. When he started to lean more heavily against her Y/N lightly shook him awake. They climbed down the tree, Steve made it to the ground first and turned to help Y/N down.

She followed him through the back door, picking up their jackets and Steve's sunglasses on the way. Steve was waiting at the bottom staircase for her, staring at her with an empty look on his face and his hand outstretched. Y/N shifted the jackets to one arm, quickly sliding the glasses on top of her head to free one of her hands so she could take his with a soft smile.

Steve dragged her up the stairs behind him, tugging her into his bedroom. Y/N deposited the jackets on top of his dresser, looking around the room in awe.

It hasn't changed much, aside from the now bare walls where childish posters used to hang. Clothes were put away in drawers half-assed, hanging out messily. There wasn't anything on the floor, which Y/N expected to be covered in dirty laundry.

"Here," Steve said, startling Y/N. He was holding out a shirt and sweatpants that both looked far too big for her shorter stature. Y/N took them with a quiet 'thank you,' and Steve just nodded before turning around. Taking that as her queue, Y/N turned around as well, quickly shedding her top and skirt to throw on Steve's clothes. She kicked off her flats, moving them next to Steve's bed so they were out of the way.

Y/N turned around just in time to see Steve pull on his own shirt, and she fought a blush as she watched the muscles in his back move. Shuffling over to the bed, Y/N climbed into the side away from the door, dropping her costume at the foot of the bed. As she was settling in the lights turned off, and Y/N watched Steve climb into the bed next to her.

"It's just like old times," Steve laughed, grinning over at Y/N from his side of the bed, "Now we just need a shit ton of candy to make us sick."

Laughing along with him, Y/N was happy to see that she was able to distract Steve, at least for the night. She reached across the bed to take his hand in hers, hoping that she was able to help him after all these years.

"Goodnight Steve."

## 2. The Cellar

The next morning Y/N woke up alone to the smell of pancakes flooding her senses. Y/N got up, pushing the blanket off of her but stopped when she heard something clatter to the ground. On the foot of the bed were her clothes from the last night, washed and folded and on the floor was a toothbrush and some toothpaste.

Y/N made fast work of getting ready, going to the bathroom to brush her teeth. Going back to Steve's room, Y/N threw on her clothes, dropping the ones she borrowed from Steve in his hamper. Quickly checking her hair in the mirror, Y/N slid on her shoes, following the smell of pancakes downstairs to the kitchen. Y/N turned the corner to find Steve standing in front of the stove flipping a pancake, dancing to music only he could hear.

"Good morning," Y/N mumbled, rubbing her eyes as she leaned against the counter next to Steve. He jumped, spinning around to look at her with an embarrassed smile on his face.

"Morning," Steve slid the pancake onto the plate next to him, "I couldn't remember if you liked pancakes or not."

Steve passed one of the plates over to Y/N, grabbing the other for himself as he steered her towards the dining room table. There were two glasses of orange juice and cutlery set out already, so Y/N plopped herself down in her old spot next to Steve.

"It's fine, thank you."

They ate in silence, Y/N not having anything to say and Steve not knowing what to say. When they were done they quickly washed the dishes, "I can take you over to your house so you can get your books and change."

"Alrighty then, let's go," Y/N said, moving towards the front door with Steve right behind her.

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"Are you going to be okay?"

Steve let out a deep sigh, leaning back heavily in his seat. His hands gripped the steering wheel tighter as he stared at the school. He looked tired, and Y/N couldn't blame him. From the looks the two of them were getting, people already knew what happened.

"I don't know, I don't even want to see her."

"Well, just go through your day, and whatever happens, happens."

"Whatever happens, happens," Steve repeated, giving himself an encouraging nod, "Thanks, Y/N."

"Don't worry about it," Y/N said, getting out of the car before more people got to the parking lot, "If you need me, you know where to find me."

Y/N didn't wait for a response, walking straight into the school to her locker. She got to her math class early, wanting to finish the last of the homework she didn't finish because of the party while also avoiding the rest of the student body.

During Y/N fourth period spare, was editing her essay when someone dropped heavily into the seat next to her. Y/N jumped so hard her knee hit to bottom of the desk, tipping her pencil case over and spilling her pens across the desk.

"Shit, sorry," Steve said, collecting Y/N pens and stuffing them back into her pencil case, "Didn't mean to scare you."

"It's okay," Y/N said, looking at Steve's face for the first time. He looked empty, drained of any and all energy, "It didn't go well, did it?"

"I asked her what she remembered, and then when she couldn't remember past spilling punch I told her what she said. And when she claimed she was drunk and didn't remember any of it I asked her if she loved me. She couldn't say it."

"I'm so sorry Steve," Y/N said, shifting her chair closer to him. Steve leaned up against her side, resting his head on top of hers. Y/N left him be, turning back to her essay to get it done. They sat like that until the bell rang, Steve taking comfort in his old friend while Y/N

thanked every god that nobody was in the part of the library they were in to see him that weak.

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The next day Y/N was back in the library when Steve came to her again. "I have a plan," Steve stated, looking determined as ever.

"Do you now?"

"Yup," Steve popped the 'p', turning to Y/N with a bright smile, "I'm gonna bring her some flowers, and we're gonna have a talk."

"You should apologize."

"For what?!" The librarian shushed them, and Steve calmed down before repeating himself in a whisper, shooting the woman an apologetic look.

"For overreacting," Y/N shrugged, turning back to her science homework, "I don't know. It won't hurt though."

"Alright," Steve nodded, and Y/N almost laughed at the serious look on his face, "but you have to come with me."

"What? Why?" Y/N completely abandoned her homework now, wanting to know what Steve was up to.

"For moral support," Steve stated as if it were obvious, and at the glare he got in return he turned desperate, "Come on, Y/N! Please? For me?"

"When?" Y/N sighed, but smiled when Steve's face lit up. He wrapped Y/N in a quick hug before standing up.

"This Saturday, I'll call you!"

The librarian shushed him once more, and Steve gave her a bright smile and a wave as he left. A weird feeling settled in Y/N's stomach, but she pushed it away, collecting her things to head to her next class.

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Saturday rolled around, and as Y/N opened her eyes that morning, she wished with every fibre of her being that Steve forgot about her being his moral support.

Y/N continued her day as normal, changing out of her pyjamas into comfortable clothes. When she went downstairs the house was quiet, and Y/N looked outside to find the cars in the driveway gone.

She spent the whole day alone in her room reading by her window. It was late afternoon, just before dinner, when the phone rang. Y/N ran downstairs, flopping down across the couch as she picked up the phone, already knowing who was on the other side, "Hello?"

"You ready to go?"

"I guess, I just don't-"

"Okay great, I'll be there in two minutes," with that Steve hung up, leaving Y/N to glare up at her ceiling. Not knowing how long they were going to be, Y/N went to the kitchen to find something to eat. Just as a honk came from outside Y/N spotted a jar of cookies. Quickly grabbing two, Y/N ran out the door.

Y/N didn't even have time to close the car door before Steve was driving off. She kept quiet, listening to Steve mumble words of encouragement to himself while eating her cookies. In no time they were pulling up to Nancy's house.

"Wish me luck," Steve said, grabbing a bouquet of flowers from the back seat as he left. Y/N watched him walk to the house, but movement from her right caught her attention. Dustin was there, holding his bike up as he watched Steve.

Dustin marched up to him, talking to him for all of two seconds before grabbing the flowers out of Steve's hand and walking towards the car. As he got close to the passenger side he noticed Y/N was there.

He moved to open the back door but turned to Steve when he asked where Nancy was.

"Doesn't matter, we have bigger problems than your love life," Dustin

stated, tossing the flowers into the back seat, “Do you still have that bat?”

“Bat? What bat?”

“The one with the nails,” Dustin said as if Steve was stupid. Y/N couldn’t be any more confused, looking between the two of them.

“Why?”

“I’ll explain it on the way,” Dustin got into the back seat, clearly done with the conversation. Y/N twisted around to find Dustin watching her suspiciously.

“What are you doing here?”

“I was about to ask you the same thing,” Y/N said, jumping slightly when Steve wrenched his car door open, dropping heavily into the seat.

“Okay, so what’s going on?” Steve asked, driving away from the house.

“I may have found a baby Demogorgon in my trash on Halloween.”

“You found a baby what?”

“A baby Demogorgon.”

“That doesn’t explain anything Dustin,” Y/N said, glaring at the boy. When he glared back Y/N turned back around in a huff.

“I don’t have time to tell you the whole story, okay?! I found a baby Demogorgon, which I thought was a lizard, but it got bigger and escaped my terrarium. So I locked it in the storm cellar.”

Steve and Y/N sat quietly, absorbing the information Dustin gave them. It was dark out now, and Y/N was not looking forward to dealing with whatever Dustin found in the dark.

“Wait, so how big is it,” Steve asked, looking back to the road. He kept an eye on the mirror to watch Dustin.

"First he was this big," Dustin spread his thumb and index finger apart on his one wand, then moved both his hands apart, almost twice as wide as his head, "now he's like this."

"I swear to god man it's just some little lizard."

"It's not a lizard."

"How do you know?"

"How do I know it's not a lizard?" Dustin had so much attitude Y/N swore he could rival a teenage girl.

"Yeah, how do you know it not just a lizard?"

"Because his face opened up and he ate my cat."

"It ate Muze?!" Y/N exclaimed, turning around to Dustin. He nodded, looking to Steve with a raised eyebrow.

As soon as they pulled into Dustin's driveway he was jumping out of the car, Y/N and Steve following behind. The two of them went to Steve's trunk and Y/N watched wide-eyed as it opened to reveal the baseball bat embedded with nails.

Steve took the bat, giving Dustin a look as he closed the trunk. Y/N followed behind silently, coming to a stop in front of the chained up storm cellar. Steve stared down at the doors, leaning over it slightly with a glare, "I don't hear shit."

"He's down there." Steve banged on the door a couple of times, and when no sounds came from the other side he whipped around, shining the flashlight in Dustin's face.

"Alright listen, kid, I swear if this is some Halloween prank and you wasted our time," Steve gestured between Y/N and himself, "you're dead."

"It's not a prank, get it outta my face." Steve sighed, giving Dustin one lost glare before turning to the storm cellar.

"You got keys for this thing?"

### 3. Bunker Bus

Dustin and Y/N stayed at the cellar entrance while Steve went looking for Dart. Y/N took this time to get some answers from Dustin. He gave her an edited, very short version of what happened last year. How Will didn't get lost in the woods but was instead in an alternate dimension, which they called 'The Upside Down.'

The Demogorgon was also from The Upside Down, which was what killed Barb, a girl a year younger than Steve and Y/N. This place was opened by a girl named Eleven, or El, who was from the Hawkins lab.

"So you thought-"

"I know."

"Okay, you knew that thing was a baby Demogorgon, but you didn't think to tell anyone?"

"Well, no one was answering," Dustin all but shoved his walkie-talkie in her face, waving it around as if to prove his point, "That's why I got you two to help."

A light coming from the cellar startled them, and the two turned their attention to Steve, "Get down here."

They rushed down the stairs, where Steve was holding skin at the end of the bat.

"Ah, shit," Dustin said, but Steve wasn't done, turning his flashlight to the corner of the room. The beam lit up a gaping hole, "oh shit. No way, no way."

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They decided to camp out at Steve's, seeing as his parents were away for the weekend yet again. They set Dustin up in the guest room, and after much persuasion, Y/N took the couch in the living room.

After a quick breakfast the next morning, they went to the butcher shop to get spare meat and set out to the forest, where Lucas finally radioed Dustin back. Dustin explained the situation, and after a brief

argument on why Y/N and Steve were there, Dustin told him to meet them at the old junkyard.

That's where they were now, a bucket of meat in each of their hands as they travelled along the train tracks, tossing the chunks of cow along the way.

With some probing from Steve, Dustin confessed that he kept Dart to impress the new girl, which Y/N though was stupid. From the description he gave of Dart, it seemed like it was slimy and nasty looking. Not something one would use to impress a girl.

Now, Steve was giving Dustin advice on how to get the girl, and if Y/N was being honest, it fucking sucked. He was telling Dustin to 'act like you don't care because it'll drive them nuts.' Then he had to wait for the electricity, the sexual electricity. It was there that Y/N stopped listening, turning up the pop music coming out of her walkman to drown them out.

Y/N was bopping to the music, dancing along the train tracks while throwing the cow pieces around her. Distracted by the song, she didn't notice Steve had stopped moving and ran into Steve's back. She stumbled back a bit, but Steve caught her before she could fall over. Steve was still focused on Dustin however.

"You're not falling in love with this girl, are you?" Dustin was quick to deny it, "Okay good. Don't, she's only gonna break your heart and you're way too young for that shit."

They continued walking again, but only for a couple of seconds before they stopped again. Steve turned to Y/N, giving her a half-hearted glare, "You too Y/N. If you tell anyone, you're dead, I don't care how long I've known you."

"Okay...?"

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Setting up the junkyard was a pain. Thankfully, Lucas brought Max, who turned out to be the new girl Dustin is crushing on along with him. Dustin and Lucas were currently arguing behind a car, leaving Y/N, Max and Steve to do the heavy lifting. Which meant not a whole

lot was getting done in the little amount of time they had left.

Steve let out a sigh, dropping the sheet of metal he had in his hands. He stomped over to where the boys were, swiping up a pipe on the way. Dusting and Lucas didn't see him coming, so Steve used that to his advantage, hitting the car next to their heads to scare them.

"Hey, Dickheads! How come the only ones helping are Y/N and this random girl. We loose daylight in forty minutes let's go."

Once Steve kicked their asses into gear, setup flew by in a flash. It felt like only minutes past before it got dark and they were couped up in the abandoned bus. Y/N was huddled up next to Steve, tucked under his arm to keep warm. He was playing around with his lighter, and Y/N was watching it while trying to ignore Dustin's pacing.

"So, you really fought one of these things before?" Steve nodded, pulling Y/N in closer when he feels her shiver, "And you're like, totally 100% sure it wasn't a bear."

"Holly shit, don't be an idiot!" Dustin exclaimed, throwing his hands in the air. Y/N looked up at the boy in confusion, and Max looked just as surprised as she felt, "It wasn't a bear. Why are you even here if you don't believe us? Just go home."

"Yeesh, someone's cranky. Past your bedtime?" With that max left, climbing up the ladder to where Lucas was. Y/N could feel Steve's silent laughter against her side.

"That's good. Show her you don't care."

"I don't. Why're you winking Steve? Stop."

Dustin continued his pacing, and after a while that, mixed with the sound of Steve's lighter clicking was oddly relaxing to Y/N. She found herself leaning heavily on Steve, almost forgetting about why they were out there in the first place.

All of a sudden there's a roar in the distance that jerks Y/N awake. Steve and Y/N instantly get up to look out the window with Dustin worming between them. There's thick fog covering the grounds, blocking their view. Y/N desperately scans the area, but can't see

movement at all. Lucas cries out Dart's location, and they only have to wait a moment before it's visible.

Dart stops in front of the gasoline covered pile of meat they left as a trap but doesn't try to eat it. Instead, it looks like Dart is scanning the area himself, like it knows it's not alone.

"What's he doing?" Y/N whispers, squinting to get a better look.

"I don't know," Steve says as they watch Dart survey the area, "He's not taking the bait. Why's he not taking the bait?"

"Maybe he's not hungry."

"Maybe he's sick of cow."

"Steve, no," Y/N knew what he was thinking, and she didn't like it one bit. Steve backed away from the window, and Y/N grabbed his arms, looking up at him desperately.

"Y/N I have to. We don't have another choice," Steve took her hand, pressing the cold lighter into her shaking hand. He bent down slightly so he could look her in the eyes, "Hey, I'll be fine."

"I just got you back, I don't wanna lose you," Y/N sniffed, refusing to cry in front of the kids. She needed to be strong.

"You won't, okay? You won't," Steve cupped her cheeks, bringing in her forward to plant a kiss on the top of her head. He gave her a bright, though forced smile, then turned to the door of the bus. Slowly, Steve crept outside, and Y/N reluctantly closed the doors behind him.

Max came down the ladder, moving to stand next to Dustan at the window, "What's he doing?"

"Expanding the menu."

"He's insane."

"He's awesome."

Y/N watched Steve through the windows next to Dustin as he taunted Dart. He was swinging his bat around, trying to get Dart's attention, when Lucas yelled from the top of the bus once more. Max, Dustin, and Y/N all turned to '3 o'clock' to find even more Demogorgon's moving in on Steve.

Y/N ran to the bus door, Dustin hot on her heels. She ripped it open, "Steve," Dustin yelled, "Abort, abort!"

At that point, everyone was yelling, trying to get Steve to come back into the bus. Y/N watched as they all lunged at him. He dodged to the side, sliding over the hood of a wrecked car. He batted away one that went to attack him, then used the opening to run back to the bus.

Dustin and Y/N pulled him in, and they fell to the ground just inside the doors in a heap. Steve slid the door closed with his foot, then grabbed a piece of sheet metal to block it.

The bus shook as the Demogorgon's jumped onto the bus, throwing everyone off balance. Y/N got up, pulling Dustin up with her as Steve did the same. A clawed hand burst through the metal that Steve immediately started beating with his bat.

Y/N herded the kids to the other side of the bus, moving them away from the danger. Dustin was hiding behind a bus seat, calling for anyone to come and help them on his walkie-talkie. There was loud thumping on the roof, and Y/N followed the dents it made as it walked to the opening on the roof of the bus.

The Demogorgon stuck its head in, opening its mouth to let out a roar. Max screamed, and Y/N didn't even think twice, pushing her and the kids back to put herself between them and the monster.

"Get back! Get back!" Steve yelled, running over to hit it away.

It only seemed to anger the Demogorgon, and it reared back to dive in, but then it all stopped. The Demogorgon's all ran away into the forest, the roars echoing into the night as they chased something only they could hear.

"Are you guys alright?" Y/N asked, turning around to check the kids over. Dusting was the closest, so she took his face in her hands, turning it this way and that to look for any injuries. When she couldn't find any she moved on to Max, who squirmed under the attention, and finally Lucas, who batted her hands away with a huff.

Y/N felt Steve move away from her towards the front of the bus. Everyone followed close behind, looking out the windows to see if they could see anything. They all got out of the bus, looking around the now less foggy area.

"What happened?"

"I don't know."

"Steve scared them off?"

"No, they're going somewhere."

---

"You're positive that was dart?" Lucas asked.

After deciding that it was a bad idea to stay at the junkyard, they were all going back the way they came, walking along the train tracks as they scanned the trees for any movement. Y/N, Steve and Dustin were in the front, while Max and Lucas were following behind them.

"Yes, he had the same yellow markings on his butt."

"But he was tiny two days ago," Max said from beside Lucas.

"Well, he's molted three times already."

"Maulted?" Y/N laughed at Steve's pronunciation.

"Molted. Shed its skin to make room for more growth. Like hornworms."

"Well, when's he gonna molt again?"

"It's gotta be soon. When he does he'll be fully grown, or close to it."

So will his friends."

"Yeah, he's gonna eat a lot more than just a cat." As soon as the words came out of Steves' mouth, Dustin's step faltered. He tried to play it off, but Lucas had already heard.

Lucas ran in front of Dustin, grabbing his shoulders to stop him, "Wait, a cat? Dart ate a cat?"

"No, What? No."

Steve looked confused, "What are you talking about, he ate Muze."

"Muze?"

"It's Dustan's cat."

"It was Dustin's cat," Y/N stressed. Steve gave Y/N a playful shove, rolling his eye's at her.

Apparently, that was the wrong thing to say. Lucas didn't even know Dustan kept Dart, let alone that he ate Muze. The two of them started arguing, Max adding in her two cents when her name was thrown into the mix.

There was roaring in the distance, dragging Y/N attention away from the kids and towards the trees. Y/N tugged on Steve's shirt, gesturing in the direction the sound came from.

"Hey, guys?" The kids were arguing so loud they couldn't hear Steve, so he tried again, raising his voice, "Guys!"

When the roaring continued Steve ran towards the sound, Lucas and Dustin close behind.

"Damn it. Come on Max!" Y/N called before running after the boys.

They made their way through the forest fairly quick, since Lucas had been close to the lab the year before. When they got closer to the tree line Y/N and Steve moved to the front of the group, leading them through the trees as the tall building came into view

"Hello? Who's there?" a male voice called, and as they passed the last of the tree's Steve shined his light on a surprised Nancy and Jonathan.

"Steve?" They both called, looking even more confused as they noticed the kids come up behind them.

The two of them were looking for Mike and Will and figured they were in the lab. There were distant roars coming from the building, and Y/N hoped that Mike and Will, along with whoever was with them, got out okay.

Y/N was only half listening, turning to Steve to find him scanning the treeline, "Are you okay?"

Steve turned to Y/N, eyebrows scrunched in confusion, "What?"

"Earlier, when the Demogorgon's left, I forgot to see if you were okay."

"I'm fine, they didn't even touch me."

"Are you sure?"

"Y/N," Steve reached out to grab her shoulders, rubbing his hands down her arms to hold hers, "I'm fine, okay? You can't get rid of me that easily."

Y/N nodded, giving Steve a small smile while gripping his hands tightly. More roars sounded from the lab, but Y/N could only pay attention to how hard her heart was pounding.

## 4. Double Agent

Everyone was trying to figure out when they last saw Mike and Will, talking over one another as they tried to get a word in. Y/N couldn't hear what anyone was saying over the noise. While trying to listen to what everyone was saying, Y/N noticed the lights to the laboratory turn on.

"Guys," Nancy looked over to Y/N, following her line of sight to the building.

"The power's back on!" Nancy yelled, catching everyone's attention. Jonathan quickly dashed over to the security station, desperately pressing the button to open it. Y/N watched the door anxiously, but it wouldn't budge.

"Let me try," Dustin said, shoving Jonathan out of the way, "Let me try Jonathan."

Dustin began jamming the button as well, but Y/N knew it wasn't going to make a difference. She rolled her eyes, watching him silently. "Son of a bitch, you know what?" Dustin exclaimed, pressing the button harder than was necessary. Y/N kept an eye on the lab, looking for any sign of movement through the windows.

The gate creaked, and Y/N watched as it slowly slid open.

"Okay, so what now?" Max asked, looking at Steve and Y/N. Neither of them knew what to do and turned to Nancy and Jonathan who were both staring up at the lab. Jonathan looked away first, scanning the area quickly. When he noticed the car he stopped.

"I'm going in."

"What do you mean you're 'going in?' This isn't some action movie Jonathan!" Y/N exclaimed.

"Well someone has to go see if they're in there."

"You can't go in alone!"

Nancy stepped forward, moving to stand next to Jonathan, "I'll go with him."

Y/N rolled her eyes, looking at the two in front of her, though didn't try to stop them. Instead, she waited with Steve and the kids while they drove into the hell hole, praying that Mike and Will weren't in there.

---

Turns out they were, and Bob Newby ended up getting killed while trying to escape. Y/N didn't really know him. She'd seen him in passing when she had to get something from the electronics store. Joyce looked horrible, eyes red and swollen. She disappeared as soon as they got to their house, and everyone let her be.

Chief Hopper was currently trying to call for help, but from how the conversation was going, Y/N knew they didn't believe him. Dustin knew it too.

"They didn't believe you, did they?"

"We'll see."

"We'll see?!" Mike exclaimed, "We can't just sit here while those things are loose!"

"We stay here, and we wait for help." With that Hopper left to check on Joyce. Mike was mad, but since the events of last year, Y/N didn't really know how to help him. He got up from the dining table and went over to the living room, where he picked up a bundle of items. Y/N couldn't tell what it was from where she was leaning against the kitchen counter next to Steve.

"Did you guys know Bob was the original founder of Hawkins AV?"

"Really?"

"He petitioned the school to start it and everything. And then he had a fundraiser for equipment. Mr. Clarke learned everything from him. Pretty awesome, right?" Mike brought over the blue cube to the

table, placing it down so that everyone could see it, "We can't let him die in vain."

"What do you want to do Mike? The Chief's right on this. We can't stop the Demo-dogs on our own."

"Demo-dogs?" Y/N and Max asked. They shot each other an amused smile before turning back to Dustin.

"Demogorgon, dogs," Dustin mashed his hands together, "Demo-dogs. It's like a compound. It's like a play on words--"

"Okay," Max said, looking at Dustin like he was a lunatic.

"Well I think it's very clever," Y/N said, earning a bright smile from the boy. After a moment Dustin seemed to remember what was going on, and his face hardened.

"I mean, when it was just Dart, maybe... "

"But there's an army now," Lucas interjected.

"Precisely."

"His army," Mike stated, a contemplative look on his face, looking around to see if anyone caught on to what he was thinking, "Maybe if we stop him, we can stop his army, too."

Mike dashed out of the room, and everyone quickly followed behind, the kids knocking over their chairs in their haste to get up. They followed him into Will's room where he snatched up a drawing. He held it up for everyone to see.

"The shadow monster."

"It got Will that day on the field," Mike said, looking to Dustin. Y/N tensed when she felt Steve lean over her shoulder to get a better look, fighting the blush at the feeling of Steve's breath ghosting over her neck, "The doctor said it was like a virus, it infected him."

"And so this virus," Max said, staring down at the drawing, "it's connecting him to the tunnels?"

“To the tunnels, monsters, the Upside Down, everything.”

“Whoa. Slow down. Slow down,” Steve said, obviously not following along. Y/N was in the same boat.

“Okay, so, the shadow monsters inside everything,” Steve nodded, “And if the vines feel something like pain, so does Will.”

“And so does Dart.”

“Yeah. Like what Mr. Clarke taught us. The hive mind.”

“Hive mind?” Dustin turned to Steve.

“A collective consciousness. It’s a super-organism.”

“And this is the thing that controls everything. It’s the brain.”

“Like the Mind Flayer.”

---

The manual Dustin set on the table was big. It was filled with text and pictures of different characters in D&D. Dustin explained what the Mind Flayer is, and what it wants. That it wants to take over the planet since it sees everything as inferior to itself.

Steve was overwhelmed, and Y/N was currently trying to calm him down after she took him away from the table where everyone was at. They were leaning against the kitchen counter facing each other, Steve’s hand in Y/N’s while she traced shapes into his skin. It didn’t seem to help him all that much, hands moving to instead grip hers tightly. It hurt slightly, but Y/N didn’t have the heart to tell him, instead she gave him a hopefully comforting smile while rubbing her thumb over the back of his hand.

An argument broke out between everyone, and Y/N listened in to see if they came up with a plan.

“What the hell are we doing here?” Hopper asked, throwing the manual onto the table.

"I thought we were waiting for your military backup," Dustin snarked.

"We are."

"But even if they come how are they gonna stop this? You can't just shoot this with guns."

"You don't know that!" Hopper exclaimed, "We don't know anything!"

"We know it's already killed everybody in that lab."

"And we know that the monsters are gonna moult again," Lucas added in, followed by Dustin who claimed that it wouldn't be long before those tunnels reach the town."

"They're right," Joyce's shake voice caught everyone's attention, turning to look at the broken woman, "We have to kill it. I want to kill it"

Hopper moved over to her, trying to get her to see reason, "Me too Joyce. Me too. But how do we do that? We don't exactly know what we're dealing with here."

Everyone was silent, trying to think up a way to stop the Demogorgon, but Y/N remembered what Mike was saying in the car ride over.

"Didn't you say the monster can see through Will?" Mike instantly perked up.

"Will knows how, he's connected to it."

"But isn't he a spy for the Mind Flayer know?" Max asked, eyeing Will on the couch."

"Yeah, but he can't spy if he doesn't know where he is."

---

It was a mad dash to clear out the shed in the backyard. Jim went to work emptying it out, Steve and Nancy covered every surface with whatever everyone else could find so that Will wouldn't be able to recognize the room.

Y/N didn't know if it was a good idea leaving the two of them alone, but Steve insisted he would be fine, so Y/N let it go. Instead she busied herself with separating the pages of the newspaper, passing them off to Nancy whenever she would come out to get something to cover the walls. Y/N tried not to glare at her whenever she did.

Eventually, the entire room was covered, including the chairs so that there was no way he could figure out where they were. Joyce, Hopper, Mike and Jonathan stayed in the shack to get as much information out of him as possible, and everyone else waited it out in the house.

Y/N was laying on the couch, watching Steve as he took practice swings with his bat. He kept sending winks her way, spinning the bat around ridiculously. Y/N was worried that he was going to accidentally bash himself in the head.

The rest of the house is quiet, broken up by the whispers of the other kids, talking at a lower volume as if Will could hear them all the way from the shack.

It wasn't long before Hopper came back in, Joyce, Mike and Jonathan following behind him. Jim swiped up a piece of paper as he went to sit at the table, marking down lines and dots as everyone gathered around him. The kids obviously recognized the Morse code and came up with a plan to communicate with the still fighting Will.

They were able to get "close gate" from Will before the phone rang, once, then twice. Nancy ripped the phone off the wall, but it was too late. The roars from the monsters echoed in the background, sending chills down Y/N's spine.

Y/N didn't hear much of anything after that, body numb as she listened to the distant roars roaring louder and louder. It wasn't until Steve was pushing her behind him did she notice everyone was crowded around the front door, most with some type of weapon in

their hands.

As Y/N was searching for a weapon of her own, the monsters stopped making noise. Y/N eyed the windows wearily, air tense as everyone waited for one of them to make noise when one was thrown through the window. Everyone let out a scream, jumping away from it as its body lay in the corner of the room.

Everyone slowly inched forward, and watched Jim poke it with the end of his gun. When the monster didn't react Y/N let out a sigh of relief, moving out from behind Steve to get a better look.

"Don't touch it," Steve said, pulling Y/N back.

"I'm not gonna touch it How stupid do you think I am?" At Steve's smirk Y/N rolled her eyes, batting his hand away.

Though what little relief Y/N felt was instantly washed away by the sound of footsteps coming closer to the house.

Everyone turned to the door, weapons raised as they tried to figure out who, or what it could be. The lock on the door clicked open just as Hopper pushed through everyone to get to the front of the group.

Next to go was the chain-lock, and the door swung open to reveal a haggard-looking Eleven. The relief was instant, and Y/N watch Mike swooped El up in a tight hug with a smile on her face.

Eleven was their best shot at beating the monsters, and with her back, it seemed like the future got just a little brighter.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Originally posted on my Tumblr [Pythonees](#)

## 5. The Hole

### Summary for the Chapter:

With the threat of the demo-dogs pushed to the back of everyone's head, the new focus is Will, and if they can get the "virus" out of him before El closes the gate.

Mike and El were catching up quietly by the door, voices too low for Y/N to hear. Instead, Y/N looked towards the now broken window, peeking out to see a few more monster bodies lying dead on the front lawn. Y/N were far enough away that she couldn't hear the two of them, but Mike's response to whatever Eleven said was loud enough for everyone in the room to catch, voice tinged with confusion. Y/N turned to watch the exchange, arm brushing up against Steve as he took half a step forward to get in hearing range.

"Why didn't you tell me you were there? That you were okay?"

"Because I wouldn't let her." Hopper stated, stepping forward to wrap El in a tight hug, "The hell is this? Where have you been?"

"Where have you been?" El snapped back, but returned into the hug, all of the tension in her body melting away at the simple touch. Mike, however, looked less than pleased. Y/N could see the moment Mike realized what was going on.

"You've been hiding her." Y/N looked to the other kids, but it seemed that Mike was the only one that figured it out. Y/N looked back to Mike to see him raise his hand to hit an unsuspecting Hopper, "You've been hiding her this whole time!"

"Hey!" Jim quickly spun around to grab Mike by the collar of his shirt, "Let's talk. Alone"

Hopper dragged Mike off towards the bedroom, leaving El standing awkwardly in front of everyone. El watched them go, not even paying attention to Lucas and Dustin who had just stepped up to her. It wasn't until they wrapped her in a hug that she did, flinching

slightly at the contact. She was quick to hug them back though, a blissful look on her face.

“We missed you.”

“I missed you, too.”

“We talked about you pretty much every day,” Dustin said as the two of them stepped back from the girl. His smile was taking up his whole face, and El seemed to zero in on his mouth.

Her hand came up to poke at his mouth, and Y/N had to force down her laugh, “Teeth.”

“What?”

“You have teeth.” Dustin smiled in understanding, showing them off.

“Oh. You like these pearls?” He then decides to purr, even though everyone has been trying to tell him it wasn’t anywhere near as cool as he thought it was. El looked startled by the action, leaning away from him slightly. Y/N had to bring her hand up to muffle her laughter.

“Eleven?” Max stepped forward, giving El an awkward smile as she thrust her hand out in front of her, “Hey. Um, I’m Max. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

El barely even let her finish before she was brushing past Max, going straight to Joyce who wrapped her up in a warm hug. Max looked lost, but when her eyes met Y/N’s she went over to stand next to her.

“Don’t take it to heart,” Y/N whispered, “She probably isn’t a fan of new people after everything that’s happened to her.”

Max nodded but didn’t look convinced, watching El and Joyce walk towards the bedrooms.

With not much else to do, Y/N moved to the broken window, picking up the large pieces of glass while everyone else moved to do their own thing. Thankfully it was almost all large pieces, but there were some small pieces that couldn’t be picked up by hand, so Y/N

grabbed a piece wood to push the glass up against the wall so no one would get hurt.

When Y/N turned back around Joyce and El were back, standing at the dining table. Everyone moved forward to hear what they were saying when they heard Joyce mention the gate. When El confirmed that she could, in fact, close it, Lucas left to go get Mike and Hopper to fill them in.

---

After a brief discussion on how to close the gate while saving Will, everyone split up around the property to find anything that could give off heat. Everything was loaded into the car, from heaters to toasters, shoved into the trunk of the car.

Y/N stood outside with Steve and the kids to see everyone off, watching as the two cars disappeared down the dark road and into the night. As soon as the tail lights were out of sight Steve ushered everyone inside, dragging a distracted Mike in by the arm. Y/N got to work cleaning whatever she could, grabbing the garbage can from the kitchen to put the large pieces of glass in.

Behind her, Steve and Dustin were arguing about the demo-dog, and when Y/N looked over her shoulder Steve was crouched down next to the monster, wrapping a blanket around it with a disgusted look on his face before standing up with it in his arms. Y/N paid them no mind, moving back to the glass for less than a second before she could hear things being thrown to the ground somewhere behind her.

Not wanting to look, but knowing she had to, Y/N stood up slowly from the ground, brushing the dirt off her pants before following the noise to the kitchen, passing by Lucas and Max who were carrying the broom and dustpan. She saw Steve first, standing in the middle of the kitchen looking unamused with the monster cradled in his arms. Y/N only had to take another step forward to be met with the sight of Dustin, hidden behind the fridge door, dropping the contents of the fridge onto the floor.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

“I’m preserving a groundbreaking scientific discovery.”

“And this couldn’t have waited until tomorrow when all of this is over?”

Dustin closed the fridge door half way so that he could see Y/N, shooting her a dirty look before turning to Steve, “Now come on, it’s gotta be cold or it’ll rot.”

“Okay, okay,” Steve moved forward, giving in to Dustin’s antics, “But you’re explaining this to Mrs. Byers, all right?”

The two of them struggled to get it in, and Y/N watched amused as they bickered while shoving at the thing some more before finally closing the fridge door. The two of them stepped back, watching the door as it was going to spring open before turning to Y/N.

“What?” Steve asked when he noticed the amused but disgusted look on her face.

“You’ve got slime all over you.” Y/N gestured to Steve’s shoulder, where the goop was shining in the dim light of the kitchen.

Steve followed Y/N’s line of sight, face crumpling in disgust when he noticed it. He moved to shave it off of himself, but stopped, slowly looking up to give Y/N a playful smirk. Arms thrown wide, he took a step towards Y/N, “Gimme a hug.”

“No,” Y/N slowly started to back up, desperately looking to Dustin for help. He just shook his head, inching around Steve to go hide in the living room. Instead, Y/N grabbed a discarded dish towel sitting on the counter next to her, throwing it at Steve who caught it easily.

“C’mon Y/N, I thought you cared about me?”

“Not enough to get that shit all over me.” Steve gasped in mock horror, free hand coming up to cover his chest over his heart as he continued to advance on Y/N.

“You wound me, Y/N. After all we’ve been through?” Steve opened his mouth to say more, but the kid’s voice carried in from the other room, and all traces of playfulness dropped from his face. He stormed past Y/N to stand in front of the kids, hands on his hips and a look on his face that Y/N thought only parents could pull off.

“We are not, under any circumstances, going to get involved.” The kids ignored him, discussing how they want to pull the demo-dogs away from the lab to clear a path for El.

Y/N was barely following along with them as they continued to spout off ideas when Mike darted past her. Everyone moved to follow him into the next room where he stopped in front of a spot on the map covered the wall, pointing to a seemingly random area on the map.

“This is where the chief dug his hole. This is our way into the tunnel. So...,” Mike moved to another part of the map, everyone trailing behind him to see what he was thinking, “Here, right here. This is like a hub. So you got all of the tunnels feeding in here. Maybe if we set this on fire...”

“Oh, yeah? That’s a no.” Steve tried to shut down their train of thought again, only for them to continue on as if he hadn’t said a word, “Hey, Guys. Hey. Hey! Hey! This is not happening.”

“But-”

“No, no, no, no, no. No buts. I promised I’d keep you shitheads safe, and that’s exactly what I plan on doing. We’re staying here, on the bench, and we’re waiting for the starting team to do their job. Does everybody understand that?”

At the end of Steve’s speech, the kids turned to Y/N, who at that point hadn’t said anything since leaving the kitchen. Shifting uncomfortably, Y/N looked between the kids quickly, “It definitely doesn’t sound safe.”

Steve nodded his head, happy Y/N agreed with him, but Mike was not amused, “But-”

“I said does everyone understand that?” The kids were silent, glaring angrily up at Steve and Y/N, “I need a yes.”

An engine revving in the distance caught everyone’s attention, and Max bolted to the window behind the couch to look outside, Lucas following close behind. It only took her a second before she figured out who it was, “It’s my brother. He can’t know I’m here. He’ll kill

me,” Max turned to look at Lucas, “He’ll kill us.”

---

It was simple really, stay away from the windows while Steve somehow got Billy to leave. But Y/N turned her head for one second, and when she turned back all the kids were smushed up against the window to see what was going on. Before Y/N could even yell at them they were all ducking down on the couch. The kids all scrambled away from the door, and Y/N moved to stand in front of them.

The door slammed open, Billy angrily stomping into the room. He gave Y/N a quick once-over before moving to walk around her, but Y/N moved to stay in front of him, hands raised in front of her.

“Look, Billy-”

“Shut up,” Billy muttered, grabbing at her hands and throwing her to the side where she fell into a shelf, taking books and random knick knacks down with her as she dropped to the floor. Y/N couldn’t hear or see much, hazy from the pain in her side as she quickly but unsteadily stood up.

When she was on her feet she turned to where the kids were, only to find Lucas shoved up on the china cabinet in the kitchen by Billy. Angry, Y/N stormed up to him, grabbing the hair at the back of his head to get him away. Billy let out a roar of pain as he stumbled back, swinging around to land a hard punch on Y/N’s cheek, causing her to stumble back into the dining table.

Y/N stumbled forward to hit him, but Billy was faster, shoving her back hard enough to topple her over one of the chairs that were pulled away from the table. She threw her hand out to catch herself, but her entire bodyweight forced down on her wrist, causing it to bend at an odd angle before giving out entirely. Y/N’s head hit the floor hard, and she stifled a scream as she cradled her wrist to her chest, feeling around the tender flesh, thankfully finding nothing wrong.

There was more yelling from the kids, and Y/N opened her bleary eyes to watch as Max shoved a needle into Billy’s neck. Gasping for

breath, Y/N dragged herself off of the ground to where the kids were, stumbling to a stop to stare down at Billy, unconscious on the ground, with Steve's bat lodged into the ground between his legs.

"Holly shit," Y/N slurred, turning to look at Max, who was holding Billy's keys in her hands., "Oh, no. You're not driving. You probably can't even reach the pedal."

"Y/N, you can't even stand up straight, you can't drive right now," Max rolled her eyes, batting Y/N's hand away when she moved to take them from her, "We're going with or without you. Plus, I know how to drive. I've done it before."

---

Turns out Max did, in fact, know how to drive. Lucas was in the front guiding Max while Y/N, Steve, Mike and Dustin were crammed into the back. Steve was still knocked out, slouched up against Y/N and smearing blood all over her shirt while Dustin was holding an ice pack to Steve's head. Though from the numbness of her nose, Y/N figured some of it was hers too.

Most of the ride was thankfully silent, Y/N's pounding headache a more manageable level. There's a groan from Steve, and Y/N looks over to watch Steve as he looked around the car. He didn't seem to notice what was going on at first, mistaking Mike for Nancey before turning his attention to the front of the car. He stared at Max blankly for a moment before everything seemed to register, causing him to freak out.

Dustin tried to calm him down, but he was getting more hysterical by the second. The commotion was making Y/N's headache worse, and she closed her eyes tightly to trying and ignore the sound, to no avail. Max was getting agitated, and speed up the car, causing everyone to start yelling over each other and for Max to almost miss her turn.

They sped through a field, the car being thrown every which way as the tires flew over the uneven ground. Y/N hand her hands braced on the car, head bobbing around as Steve continued to yell. Y/N looked up just in time to see the hole to the tunnels coming up, and braced herself on the passenger seat in front of her just before Max slammed on the breaks.

Everyone quickly got out of the car, Dustin pulling Y/N out and towards the trunk where all the gear they brought was. Everyone started putting stuff on, Y/N slower than the rest, while Steve objected from his spot slouched against the car door. Y/N grabbed an oil can, giving Steve an apologetic smile as she passed him by, placing it next to the hole.

When none of the kids responded to him he got angrier, to the point where his anger seemed to steady him enough to storm up to Dustin, ripping whatever he had out of his hand and throwing it back into the trunk.

“Steve, you’re upset, I get it. But the bottom line is, a party member requires assistance, and it is our duty to provide that assistance,” Y/N listened to Dustin while helping the others into the hole, passing them cans after they dropped down, “Now, I know you promised Nance that you would keep us safe,” Dustin pulled a backpack and Steve’s bat out of the trunk, holding it out to Steve, “So, keep us safe.”

It seemed that was all the convincing Steve needed, because when Y/N looked up from the dark hole Steve and Dustin were standing next to her, geared up and ready to go. Y/N took Dustin’s oil can, letting him jump in before dropping it down to him. When he moved out of sight Y/N looked back up to Steve.

“Ready to go Rambo?”

Steve just groaned, rolling his eyes before gesturing to the hole. Y/N laughed but swung her legs over the edge, picking up her discarded flashlight before dropping into the darkness.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Originally posted on my Tumblr [Pythonees](#)

## 6. Snow Ball

### Summary for the Chapter:

Going underground was something Y/N never wanted to do again. Though setting the place on fire was kinda fun.

If there was one thing Y/N never wanted to do again, it was to never, ever go in a tunnel for the rest of her life. Getting in and setting the place on fire was the easy part. They made quick work of dousing the place with gasoline, knowing that time was not on their side, but getting out proved more difficult then any of them could have guessed.

They knew the demo-dogs would come for them, but the first one they ran into was Dart. Thankfully he turned out to be harmless once given Three Musketeers and was distracted enough that they were all able to sneak past and get back to the hole. Y/N could see the light from the car streaming in from the hole when the tunnel started to shake, throwing everyone off balance. They knew without a doubt that the demo-dogs were coming for them, and Steve scrambled to lift all of the kids up and out of the hole with Y/N's help.

It was just Steve and Y/N when they felt the tunnel rumbling once more, but this time it was from the demo-dogs running towards them from further in the tunnels. As they turned the corner into their tunnel they had just lifted Dustin out to the surface. The kids were yelling above them, but Y/N could only hear the pounding of her heart as she watched the demo-dogs run right towards her and Steve.

His arms wrapped around her, pulling her into him while his other hand raised up, bat ready to swing, even though it would be useless against so many. Y/N closed her eyes, gripping onto Steve's arm tightly as she waited for the pain. When she didn't feel anything she opened her eyes to watch as the demo-dogs ran past them as if they weren't even there, to something more important then two measly humans.

The two of them stood there, chests heaving as they watched the last

of the monsters run past them, growling as they went. As soon as Y/N could no longer hear their chilling snarls she let out a sigh of relief, sagging against Steve, gripping at her shirt in a feeble attempt to calm her erratic heart.

“Are you okay?” Steve murmured, arm tightening around Y/N briefly before slowly letting her go, hand ghosting against Y/N’s side, making her shiver. All Y/N could do was nod, but it was enough for Steve, “Let’s get out of here.”

Steve lifted Y/N up and out of the hole, while the kids pulled her up from the surface by her arms. Once out they quickly turned to help Steve, eager to get back to the house and away from the demo-dogs and the hell hole. With everyone safe they all went to pile up in the car, Steve driving and Y/N in the passenger seat while the kids all crammed in the back. Max wasn’t happy with the arrangement but didn’t push her luck, instead claiming a window seat.

The drive was silent, but none of them seemed to mind. Y/N looked to the back seat to find Lucas and Mike fast asleep, slouched against each other in the middle. As she was turning to face forward she caught Steve’s eye. He was giving her a look she couldn’t quite recognize, but did notice the concern in his eyes.

Y/N gave him a smile, reaching over to take Steve’s hand that was resting on the gear shift. Steve smiled back, turning his hand over to hold her hand properly before focusing back on the road. Y/N felt her stomach flip, and hid her giddy smile by looking out the passenger window, pressing her face against the cold glass to help her blush go away.

With the soft breathing of everyone in the car, Y/N allowed herself to fully relax, eyes sliding closed as she slumped down in her seat.

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“C’mon Y/N, I don’t wanna take the kid alone, you *know* how he gets, you seem to be the only one he doesn’t mouth off to.”

Y/N sighed, flopping back on her bed with the phone pressed up to her ear, “I’ve got work to do Steve. And Dustin mouths off to everyone, including me.”

"You and I both know the only work you have to do is due in like a week," Y/N let out a groan, knowing he was right, "I'll be at your house in a minute." With that Steve hung up, and Y/N let out another groan before pushing herself up on the bed to hang up the phone. She looked down at what she was wearing, ripped jeans and an old shirt that was covered in paint from when she painted her room during the summer. Knowing that she didn't have enough time to change, Y/N ran down the stairs and past her parents to the front door. She pulled it open to see Steve pulling up in front of her house.

"By mom!" Y/N called, closing the front door without waiting for a response. Y/N quickly slides into the front seat, and Steve starts driving before Y/N can buckle her seat belt, "What's the rush?"

"I was *supposed* to be at Dustin's house a couple minutes ago, but *someone* had to be difficult."

"So this is my fault now?"

"Yup," Steve shot Y/N a grin, laughing when she shoved his shoulder.

In no time they were pulling up to the Snow Ball. Steve shut off the car before turning to look at Dustin next to him, Y/N had moved to the back seat so that the two of them could have their 'bro time.'

"All right buddy, here we are. So, remember, once you get in there..."

"Pretend like I don't care," Y/N rolled her eyes, but kept her mouth shut, looking at all of the kids walking into the gym in their outfits instead of arguing.

"You don't care."

"I don't care."

"There you go. You're learning, my friend. You're learning." Dustin shifted up in his seat to see himself in the mirror, but Steve stopped him, "Hey."

"What?"

"Come on. You look great, okay? You look... You look great. Okay? Now you're gonna go in there..."

"Yeah."

"Look like a million bucks."

"Yeah." Dustin sounded excited, and Y/N looked up to the mirror to see a wide smile stretched across Dustin's face.

"And you're gonna slay 'em dead."

"Like a lion," Dustin then decides to roll his tongue, but thankfully Steve puts a stop to it. Steve and Y/N wish him good luck and watch as he disappears into the gym. Once she can't see him anymore Y/N climbs into the front seat, ignoring Steve threatening her if she dirties up the car, knowing that it was just an empty threat.

"Where to now Mr. I don't care."

"There's a burger joint across town if you're hungry."

"The one with the curly fries?" Y/N asked. Steve gave a nod, not even waiting for a response before driving off, knowing Y/N would never pass up a chance to have curly fries.

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"So, what has the all mighty King Steve been up to the last few weeks?" Y/N asked, dipping her fries in ketchup before stuffing them into her mouth, watching Steve from his side of the booth.

Steve let out a groan, "Don't call me that."

"Fine, but you still haven't answered my question." Steve shrugged, taking a sip of his milkshake before answering.

"Just trying to sort things out, you know. A lot happened all at once and I needed some time. I can't bounce back as fast as those kids, you know?"

"Yeah, I know what you mean. It's like it never even happened. I guess kids are just better at adapting to situations like that," Y/N

hesitated a moment before asking another question, “How are you and Nancey?”

“Good, it’s good. Seeing her with Jonathan was hard at first, but I think we can be friends.”

“That’s good Steve, that’s really good. I’m glad you’re okay.” Y/N reached across the table to take Steve’s hand, fighting down the blush that was surely creeping its way up her face.

“You helped,” Steve admitted, head ducked while he took a long drink from the smoothie to avoid looking at Y/N.

“Me? How did I help?” Y/N watched him anxiously, surprised to see a blush spreading across his face.

“Even though we didn’t see each other that much after the gate was closed, we talked on the phone a lot. It helped keep mind off of things,” Steve took a breath, looking into Y/N’s eyes with determination, though he was fidgeting with nerves, “Made me realize how happy you make me. Like, really happy.”

Y/N didn’t know what to say, too surprised by the confession to do anything put grip Steve’s hand tighter, “You make me happy too, Steve.”

Steve shook his head, a distraught look settling on his face, “No, not,” Steve let out a groan, “You make me happier than I ever was with Nancey. It’s so much easier with you, I don’t feel like I have to prove myself, you know? You’ve seen all the stupid shit I’ve done but that didn’t stop you from staying with me.”

Steve takes a breath and moves to wipe his sweaty palms, but Y/N just tightens her grip, giving him an amused, yet flustered smile, “If I left you alone who knows what mess you would get into.”

“Well, I don’t plan to let you go. Not again.”

Y/N’s smile softens, keeping a hold of Steve’s hand, “Good. I won’t let you.”

**Notes for the Chapter:**

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